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ABSTRACT

The Austin (Texas) Independent School District (AISD) received monies to combat drug and alcohol abuse on its campuses through the Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) Act of 1986. Each year, programs funded and services purchased with these funds have changed. In 1990-91 most of the DFSC monies were used for these projects: the Secondary Student Leadership Development Program which consisted of 1-day workshops for secondary students; a Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) program at all high schools and five junior high/middle schools; a MegaSkills project offering training in parenting skills in the elementary schools; and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) which was offered to all fifth- and seventh-grade students. The results of an evaluation indicated: (1) there was no districtwide Prevention and Remediation In Drug Education (PRIDE) coordinator to oversee prevention activities; (2) on districtwide surveys, teachers and high school students ranked use of drugs and drinking/alcoholism as lesser problems in 1990-91 than in 1989-90; (3) compared to seventh graders surveyed statewide, fewer AISD seventh graders reported having tried alcohol and inhalants, but more students reported having tried tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine; (4) training for elementary parents was offered through the MegaSkills program, with almost two-thirds of elementary schools having a trainer on campus; and (5) students credited attendance at Secondary Student Leadership Development (SSLD) retreats with helping in the areas of leadership, confidence, decision making, and resistance to drugs and alcohol. (ABL)

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Key Issues in Education: Drug-Free Schools

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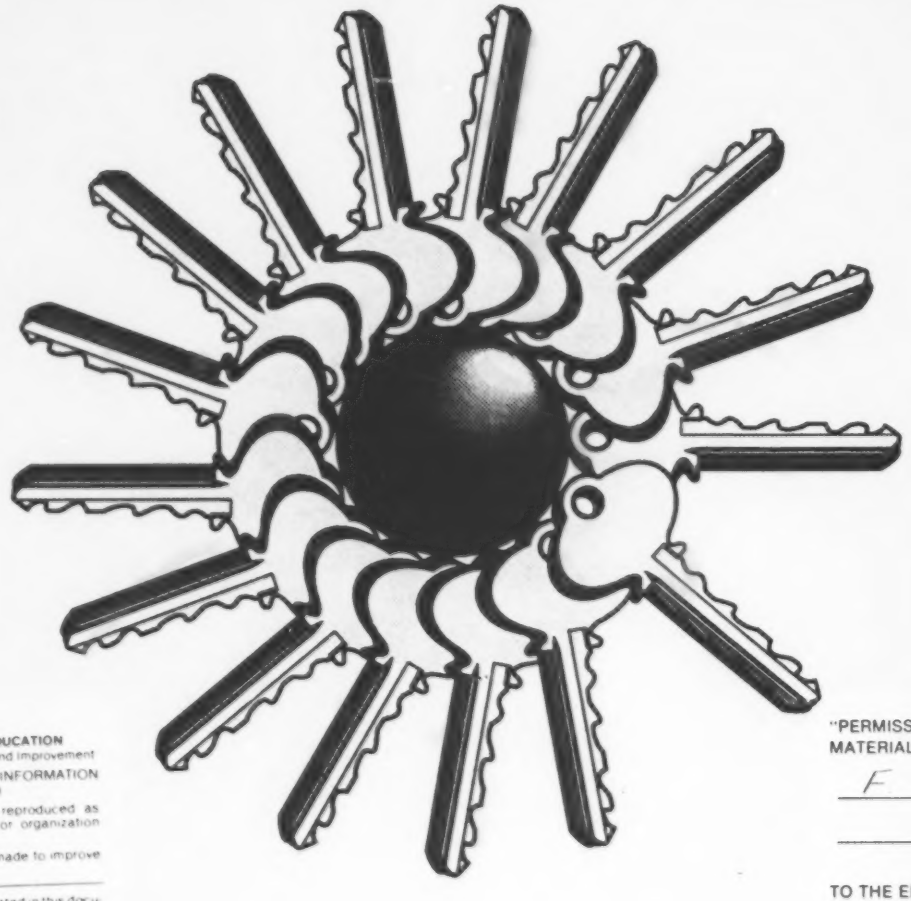

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1990-91 Program Evaluation of Federally Funded Drug-Free Schools Programs

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KEY ISSUES IN EDUCATION: DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

1990-91 Program Evaluation of Federally Funded Drug-Free Schools Programs

Austin Independent School District
Department of Management Information
Office of Research and Evaluation

Author: Roxane Smyer

Program Description

AISD received monies to combat drug and alcohol abuse on its campuses through the Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) Act of 1986. The District has received federal grant monies for four years. The amount of the grant for the 1990-91 school year was $398,129.

Each year, programs funded and services purchased with these funds have changed. In 1990-91, most of the DFSC monies were allocated to the following components.

- The Secondary Student Leadership Development Program consisted of one-day workshops for secondary students in a retreat setting outside Austin.
- Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) was offered at all high schools and five junior high/middle schools. The program provides training to students on a variety of topics. These students then work with other students.
- The MegaSkills project offered training in parenting skills to parents at more than half of the District elementary schools.
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), in conjunction with the Austin Police Department, is offered to all District fifth- and seventh-grade students.

Major Findings

1. There was no districtwide Prevention and Remediation In Drug Education (PRIDE) coordinator to oversee campus drug and alcohol abuse prevention activities.
2. On districtwide surveys, teachers and high school students ranked use of drugs and drinking/alcoholism as lesser problems in 1990-91 than in 1989-90.
3. Compared to 7th graders surveyed statewide, fewer AISD 7th graders reported having tried alcohol and inhalants, but more students reported having tried tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine.
4. Training for elementary parents was offered through the MegaSkills program. Almost two thirds of elementary schools (59%) had a MegaSkills trainer on the campus.
5. Students credit attendance at Secondary Student Leadership Development (SSLDP) retreats with helping them in the areas of leadership, confidence, decision making, and resistance to drugs and alcohol.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary i

Open Letter iii

Introduction 1

Budget 1

Scope of the Problem 2
National Drug and Alcohol Use Statistics 2
Statewide Drug and Alcohol Use Statistics 3
AISD Employee Opinion 4
AISD Student Opinion 5
AISD MIddle School Student Opinion 8

Elementary Programs
MegaSkills 11
Program Description 11
Opinion about MegaSkills 12

Secondary Programs
Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) 13
Program Description 13
Opinions about PAL 14
Students Receiving PAL Services 15
Performance on Measures of School Success 17

Secondary Student Leadership Development Program 19
Program Description 19
Opinion about SSLDP 19

Dispute Resolution Project 21
Program Description 21

Districtwide Programs
Prevention and Remediation in Drug Education 22
Program Description 22

Office of Student Support Services 23
OSSS Intern 23
Consultants 23
Plays for Living 23

Drug Abuse Resistance Education 24
Program Description 24
Officer Characteristics 24
Opinions about DARE 25

OPEN LETTER TO AISD DECISION MAKERS

For the past four years, the District has received Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) funds from a federal grant to supplement its locally funded drug and alcohol education efforts. Each year the range of programs receiving money and the types of materials and curriculum purchased have changed and expanded. The changes have tended to reflect a short-range redistribution of resources based on staff desires rather than a comprehensive long-range plan addressing District needs. In addition, previous to the 1990-91 school year, there was little commitment to assessing the scope of drug and alcohol use among AISD students. Both of these issues were discussed in the Open Letter in last year's DFSC final report (see ORE Pub. No. 89.38).

In 1990-91, AISD made strides towards better assessment of the scope of substance abuse among students. Middle school and junior high school students were administered a survey that dealt with many issues including drug and alcohol use. Students were asked to report their own use of alcohol and illicit drugs rather than to report the number of other students they knew who used drugs or alcohol. Items for the survey were taken from a statewide survey developed by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) and Texas A&M University. TCADA items were selected because they allow for a direct comparison between reported rates for AISD students and students statewide. Decision makers are encouraged to continue using a direct use survey. Decision makers also are encouraged to consider allowing TCADA to administer its survey to AISD students in grades 6-12. Permitting the administration of the TCADA survey will allow AISD to assess reported use patterns among students and to compare these rates to rates reported statewide. The cost for administration could be absorbed by the DFSC grant. TCADA will administer the survey to students and summarize the results. Because AISD has opted thus far not to be included in the TCADA sample, AISD students are not included in use rates reported for the State of Texas. The inclusion of Austin in statewide findings would make statewide results more accurate.

In the area of a comprehensive drug and alcohol prevention plan, however, the District is still falling short. Symptomatic of this lack of a plan is the lack of coordination among various drug-free components and with local prevention efforts. Each component has appropriate staff to oversee and implement it. However, there is no coordination among programs. This lack of coordination in 1990-91 was compounded by the absence of a districtwide PRIDE coordinator. Every administrator interviewed about AISD's drug-free efforts indicated a need for a person responsible for their administration. Ideally this person would be responsible for coordinating all substance abuse efforts, whether they are grant funded or not. The 1990-91 DFSC grant did provide for a program facilitator who assessed AISD's compliance with the law for receiving the drug-free monies. This sort of

position, with a degree of power to implement policy is what is needed.

Coordination can not substitute for a comprehensive drug and alcohol abuse prevention plan. Elementary Education has developed a scope and sequence, and there are plans to implement Educating for Self-Responsibility II (ESR II) at AISD secondary campuses, but a plan involving all programs and efforts should be developed. The development of this plan could be greatly helped by the coordinating position discussed above.

In sum, AISD has now received federal grant funds for four years and in that time has mobilized a range of curricula and programs toward its goal of drug-free schools. The effectiveness of these efforts has been documented in ORE's annual evaluation reports. However, only in the last year has AISD improved its assessment of the scope of drug and alcohol use in the District, and considerable effort is still needed in the area of coordinating all AISD efforts and developing a districtwide plan for preventing drug and alcohol abuse. Planning now underway needs to be supported and sustained.

INTRODUCTION

AISD has received federal grant monies through the "Drug-Free Schools and Communities (DFSC) Act of 1986" (P.L. 99-570) since the 1986-87 school year. Each year, programs funded and materials purchased with these funds have changed. The money has been used to try to combat drug and alcohol abuse among students. Major amounts of grant monies are used for educational programs at both the elementary and secondary level, to purchase curricula and materials, and to support other AISD offices such as the Office of Student Support Services. In order to get a better picture of the range of services available to the District, this report will be divided into three sections. One section will address efforts aimed at elementary students, one at secondary students, and a third will address districtwide efforts. The report will focus on AISD's drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts that are funded through the Drug-Free Schools and Communities grant. The District does have other programs that address the problems of drug and alcohol abuse, but they are beyond the scope of this report.

Budget

AISD utilized $398,129 of new Drug-Free Schools funds in a variety of ways in the 1990-91 school year. Allocations as of February 28, 1991 (including amounts carried over from the 1989-90 school year) were as follows:

	1989-90	1990-91
• Secondary Student Leadership Development Program	$ 8,154	$81,015
• Dispute Resolution Project	$ 220	$45,391
• Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)	$26,232	$16,097
• Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL)	$38,760	$ 2,124
• Education for Self-Responsibility (Preventing Drug and Alcohol Abuse) II	$0	$32,146
• MegaSkills	$0	$29,329

Additional allocations were for Program Facilitator ($49,583), Elementary Education ($41,349), the Office of Student Support Services (OSSS) ($40,199), evaluation ($31,018), counselor support ($19,450), management ($12,287), private schools ($6,611), Secondary Education ($5,157), and Health Services ($2,700). Notably, the majority of the grant money went to Secondary Education programs. In 1991-92, the District should consider whether this disproportionate allocation accomplishes its systemwide aims.

In 1990-91, two positions were created that had an impact on the DFSC grant: the Director of Community and Student Support Services and a Program Facilitator. The Director oversees local

District offices related to providing service to AISD students, such as the Office of Student Support Services and the Office of Home School Services. These offices receive some of the grant monies. The Program Facilitator reviewed AISD drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts and made recommendations about how they could be improved and be brought into compliance with federal mandates.

When AISD administrators were interviewed about their perceptions of the organization of the DFSC grant, all indicated that greater coordination was needed. Administrators believed that the many parts of the grant had no central figure to pull them together. Concern was also expressed over the District's lack of a K-12 drug and alcohol abuse education program. Hiring the director and project facilitator is movement toward these ends, but all administrators believed that further progress was needed. For a lengthier discussion of this issue, see the "Open Letter" at the beginning of this report.

Scope of the Problem

National Drug and Alcohol Use Statistics

National survey results indicate that most high school students had used alcohol, and almost half had used marijuana.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), in conjunction with the University of Michigan's Center for Survey Research, conducts an annual nationwide survey of high school seniors. The national survey includes both public school and private school students. In the survey it was found that:

- 91% had used alcohol,
- 44% had used marijuana, and
- 18% had used inhalants, at least once.

When queried about their behaviors in the past month:

- 60% indicated they had used alcohol,
- 17% had used marijuana, and
- 2% had used inhalants.

The 1990 national survey results were virtually unchanged from 1988 survey results..

Statewide Drug and Alcohol Use Statistics

High percentages of students in the State of Texas also report using alcohol, but at a lower rate than those reported in the national survey. The percentage of Texas students also reporting marijuana use was also lower than the national findings. However, more Texas students reported using inhalants.

In 1990, the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), in conjunction with Public Policy Resources Laboratory at Texas A&M University, surveyed Texas secondary students about their personal use of drugs and alcohol.

- Four fifths (81%) indicated alcohol use,
- One quarter (23%) reported having tried marijuana, and
- One quarter (24%) had tried inhalants.

The 1990 survey found that students' reported use of illegal drugs and other illicit substances has declined since the 1988 school year. However, for the same period, reported rates of alcohol use increased 5%.

Furthermore, use of both alcohol and drugs tends to increase with the grade level.

- More than two thirds (69%) of seventh graders had used alcohol compared to almost all (90%) of high school seniors. These percentages reflect a 10% increase from 1988 to 1990 in lifetime prevalence for seventh graders versus a 5% increase for seniors.

- Few (11%) seventh graders had used drugs in their lifetime, compared to 40% of seniors. Both of these represent a decrease in reported use of 14 percentage points from the 1988 survey.

Secondary students in Texas report using drugs and alcohol. Texas seniors report use of these substances at about the same rate as those sampled in the NIDA survey.

AISD Employee Opinion

Use of drugs and alcohol were seen as lesser problems by AISD staff on 1991 distictwide surveys than on the 1990 surveys. Most teachers indicated that they did not know whether the presence of alcohol was increasing, decreasing, or staying the same on their campuses.

AISD employees were asked questions dealing with drugs and alcohol on the spring, 1991 districtwide survey. Among 16 options, use of drugs was rated the 8th-biggest problem and drinking/alcoholism was the 11th-biggest problem with which the schools must deal (see Figure 1).

When asked whether the teachers felt the presence of drugs was increasing, decreasing, or staying the same on their campus most teachers responded that they did not know (80% of elementary teachers and 44% of secondary teachers). Of those teachers expressing an opinion:

- Less than one fifth of both elementary and secondary teachers (16% and 17%, respectively) felt that the presence of drugs was <u>increasing</u> on their campus.
- One in five elementary teachers (20%) and about one third (29%) of secondary teachers thought the presence of drugs was <u>decreasing</u> on their campus.
- About two thirds (64%) of elementary and about half (54%) of secondary teachers thought the presence of drugs was <u>staying the same</u> on their campus.

FIGURE 1
RANKING OF "USE OF DRUGS" AND "DRINKING/ALCOHOLISM" AS MAJOR PROBLEMS IN AISD SCHOOLS, 1990-91

GROUP	RANK AS PROBLEM (OF 16) Alcohol	Drugs
Teachers	11	8
Students	5	6

AISD Student Opinion

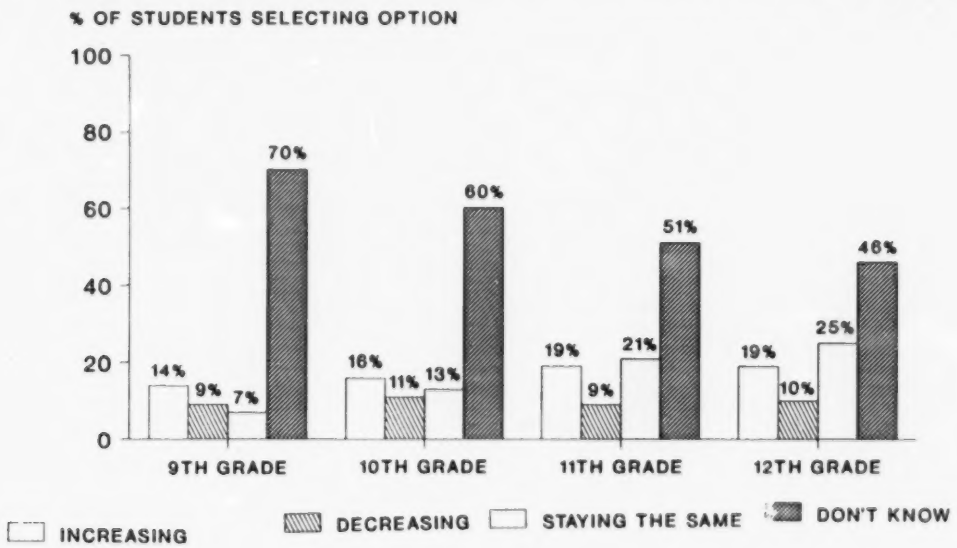
Students also ranked drugs and alcohol as lesser problems on the 1990 survey than they did in 1989. Fewer students than teachers reported not knowing whether the presence of drugs and alcohol was increasing, decreasing, or staying the same on their campus.

AISD high school students were surveyed in fall, 1990 regarding the prevalence of drugs and alcohol on their campuses. More than half (57%) of the students responded that they did not know whether the presence of alcohol was increasing, decreasing, or staying the same on their campus. Fewer older students (43% of seniors) than younger ones (66% of freshmen) selected the "don't know" option. Of those students expressing an opinion:

- Overall, more than a third (38%) of students believed the presence of alcohol was increasing on their campus.
- About one fifth (21%) of high school students indicated the presence of alcohol was decreasing on their campus.
- About two fifths (41%) said the presence of alcohol was staying the same on their campus.

As grade levels increase, fewer students responded "don't know" and more students responded that the presence of alcohol was staying the same on their campus. This is the same pattern that was found on the TCADA survey with reported use of illicit substances where older students tended to report higher usage rates than younger ones. Figure 2 shows student response by grade.

FIGURE 2
STUDENT RESPONSES TO: THE PRESENCE OF ALCOHOL ON THIS CAMPUS IS: INCREASING, DECREASING, STAYING THE SAME, OR DON'T KNOW

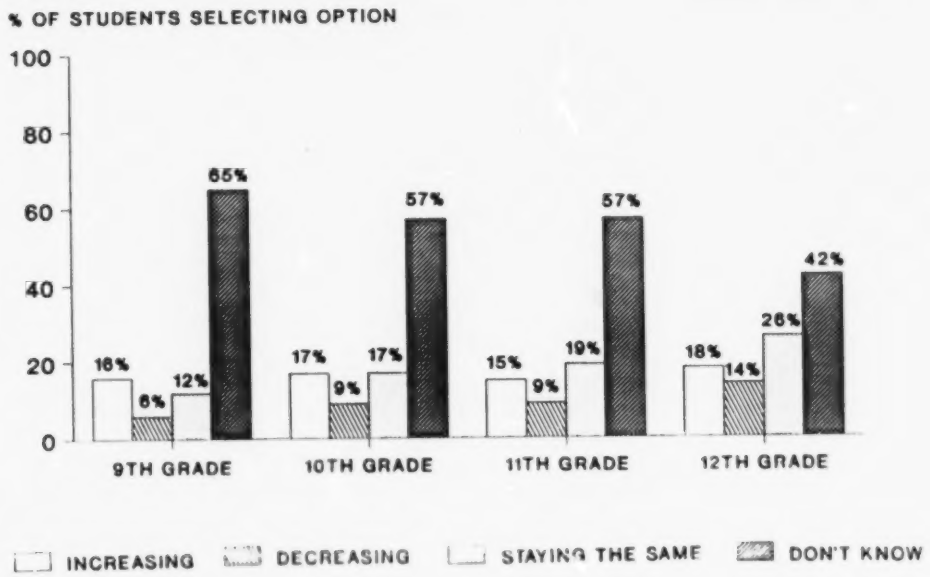


More than half (59%) of students reported not knowing whether the presence of drugs was increasing, decreasing, or staying the same on their campus. Again, more freshmen (70%) than seniors (46%) reported not knowing about the presence of drugs on their campus. Of those students expressing an opinion about drugs:

- Two fifths (40%) believed the presence of drugs was **increasing**,
- About one quarter (23%) reported that the presence of drugs was **decreasing**, and
- More than one third (37%) believed the presence of drugs was **staying the same** on their campus.

Again, ninth graders perceived the presence of drugs on campus differently than twelfth graders. All responses by grade are shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3
STUDENT RESPONSES TO: THE PRESENCE OF DRUGS ON THIS CAMPUS IS: INCREASING, DECREASING, STAYING THE SAME, OR DON'T KNOW



High school students were also asked to report how many other students they knew who used illegal drugs or alcohol once a week. Knowledge of others' use was taken as an indirect measure of student use, assuming those students who knew many others who used drugs and alcohol would be more likely to use these substances themselves. Students were asked to indicate whether they knew none (0), 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, or 10 or more students who

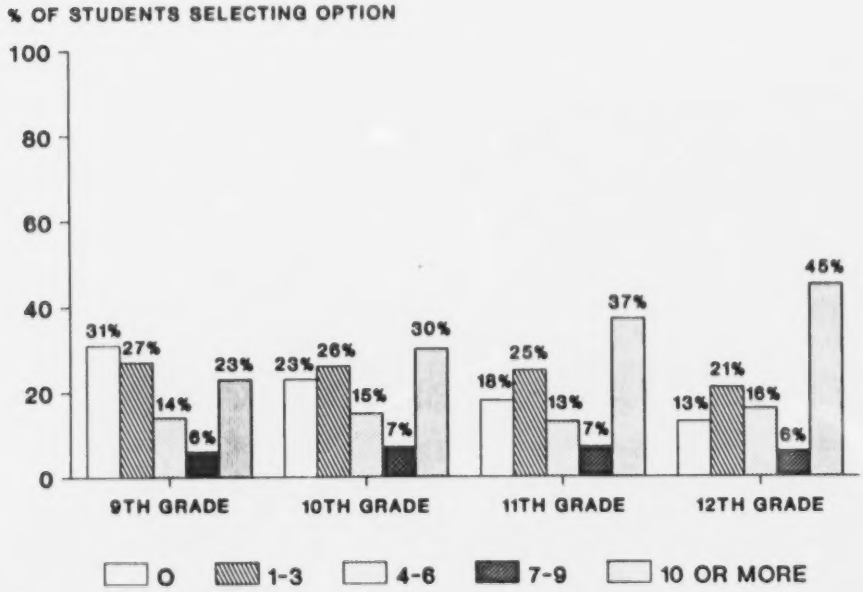
used either drugs or alcohol once a week or more. The percentage of students who reported knowing 10 or more other students who used alcohol once a week decreased from 34% in 1990 to 32% in 1991. There was a three-percentage point decline in the number of students who reported knowing 10 or more other students who used illegal drugs once a week, from 19% in 1990 to 16% in 1991. This may demonstrate a slight decline in drug and alcohol use on AISD campuses. However, it may also be a reflection of differences in the sample of students selected in 1991 versus the sample selected in 1990, i.e., sampling error.

There are similar slight declines in the other categories for alcohol:

- Almost one quarter (23%) indicated knowing of no other (0) students who used alcohol once a week. In 1990, 19% chose this option.
- One quarter (25%) reported knowing 1-3 students, versus 26% last year.
- Less than one fifth (14%) reported knowing 4-6 students, compared to 16% in 1990.
- The same percentage (6%) knew of 7-9 students who used alcohol once a week.

The same pattern of older students knowing more students who used alcohol was evident in student responses to this question. Figure 4 shows student response by grade.

FIGURE 4
STUDENT RESPONSES BY GRADE TO: I KNOW THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO USE ALCOHOL AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.

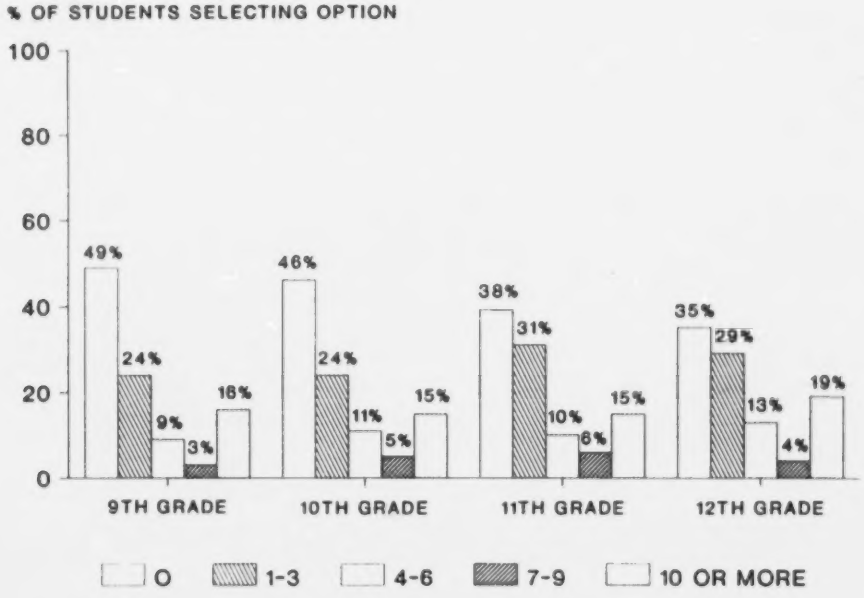


In the case of drugs there was a large decline (43% versus 34%) in the students who reported knowing of no students (0) who used drugs once a week. A decrease this large is probably not due to sampling error and could indicate a decrease in drug use. There were slight decreases in the other categories:

- 26% of students said they knew of 1-3 students who used illegal drugs once a week (29% in 1990),
- 11% reported knowing 4-6 others who did (14% in 1990), and
- 4% indicated knowing 7-9 others who used illegal drugs once a week (6% in 1990).

Again, there is a trend for older students to indicate greater knowledge, as shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5
STUDENT RESPONSES BY GRADE TO: I KNOW THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO USE DRUGS AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK. *



AISD Middle School Student Opinion

AISD middle/junior high school students were surveyed about their own drug and alcohol use for the first time in the 1990-91 school year. Fewer AISD students than Texas students reported trying alcohol and inhalants, but more AISD students reported using marijuana and tobacco.

In the 1990-91 school year, a new survey was developed for middle/junior high school students. This survey included items from the TCADA survey. This is the first time that AISD has

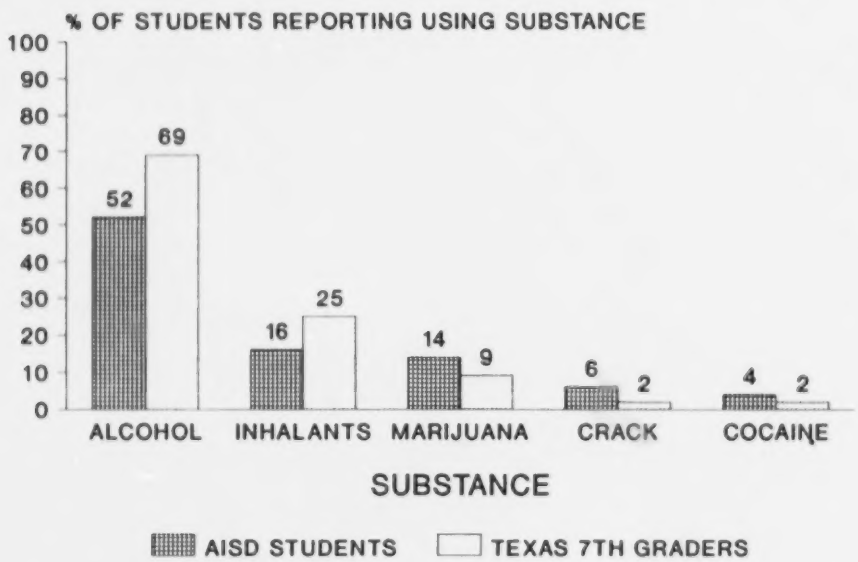
asked students directly about drug and alcohol use. TCADA items were selected for inclusion because a direct comparison between state and District results is possible. The middle/junior high school survey was administered randomly to one third of sixth- through eighth-grade students by advisory. Students reported anonymously.

AISD students were compared to seventh-grade students in the State of Texas. In AISD, seventh grade is the middle year of middle school and may be taken as a representative middle school grade. Compared to seventh graders statewide who took the TCADA survey in 1990:

- Fewer AISD students reported having tried alcohol and inhalants, but
- More students reported having tried tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine.

Figure 6 shows responses for AISD and students statewide.

FIGURE 6
COMPARISON OF REPORTED SUBSTANCE USE BETWEEN AISD MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS 1991 AND SEVENTH GRADERS ON THE 1990 TCADA SURVEY



• 1990 TCADA survey combines these options

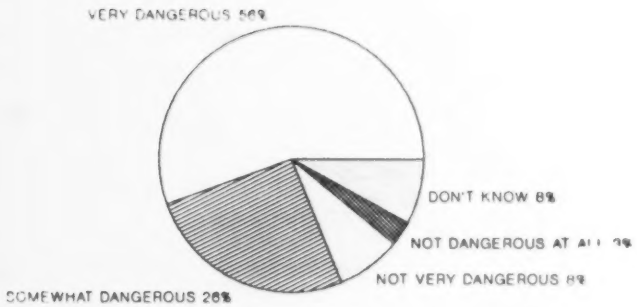
Students were also asked how dangerous they perceived use of certain illicit substances to be for children their age. Most thought using alcohol (56%), marijuana (74%), inhalants (75%), cocaine (87%), and crack (88%) was "very dangerous" for their age group (see Figure 7). **However, it appears that even though use of these substances is considered dangerous, students in AISD**

report using these substances, in some cases at greater rates than those reported statewide.

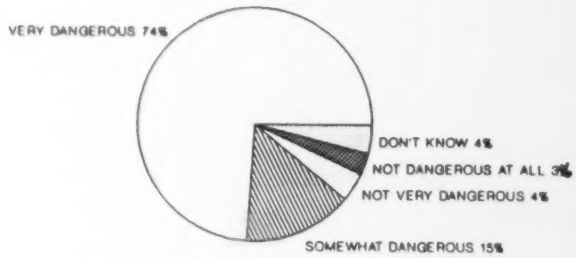
FIGURE 7
STUDENT RESPONSES TO: HOW DANGEROUS DO YOU THINK IT IS FOR KIDS YOUR AGE TO USE:

- ALCOHOL
- MARIJUANA
- INHALANTS
- COCAINE
- CRACK

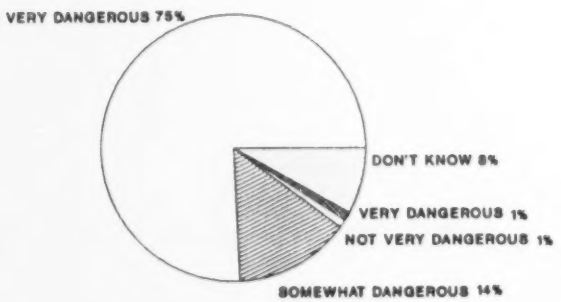
ALCOHOL



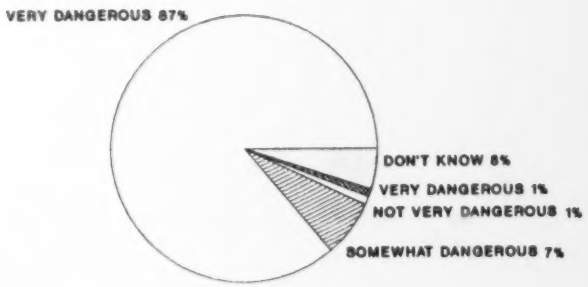
MARIJUANA



INHALANTS



COCAINE



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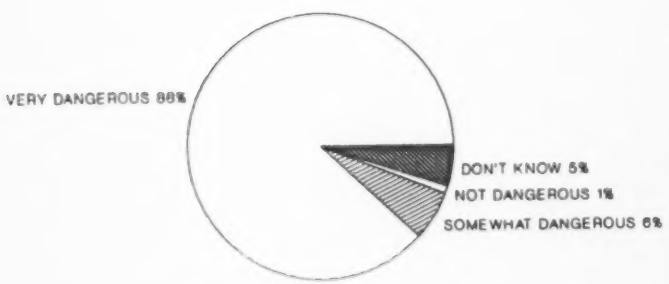


In addition to being asked to report usage, students were asked to whom they would go if they needed help with a drug or alcohol problem. The option receiving the greatest percentage of endorsement (20%) indicated that students would turn to their parents. Large percentages of students also indicated they would go to:

- A counselor or program at school (17%), and
- Friends (17%).

When asked on the middle school survey to indicate which school programs had given information about drugs and alcohol to students, the number one response was DARE (19%).

- Science classes (14%),
- Health classes (11%), and
- Assemblies (11%) were drug and alcohol resources that also received more than 10% of the responses.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

MEGASKILLS

MegaSkills was offered at over half of AISD elementary schools. Parents surveyed indicated that the program was easy to implement at home, and that their participation in the program had increased their children's interest in school.

Program Description

The MegaSkills project offers training in parenting skills to parents at some District elementary schools. The program consists of a series of eight workshops centered on the MegaSkills (confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perserverance, caring, common sense, teamwork, and problem solving). MegaSkills was developed by Dr. Dorothy Rich and the training is provided through the Home-School Institute which she heads. DFSC funds provided money to train trainers who would be responsible for delivering the workshops to parents. Each trainer was to serve 80 families. The District trained 64 people as MegaSkills trainers, enough to place a trainer on each elementary campus. However, 59% of schools were assigned a MegaSkills trainer. Of the selected schools, the majority (58%) were assigned more than one trainer. There were no set selection criteria for schools to receive the program, although schools were asked whether or not they would like to have the program on the campus. These requests and the location requests of trainers were used to put trainers on the campuses. Program administrators estimate that approximately 3,000 parents were served by the program.

Opinion about MegaSkills

AISD Staff Opinion

Project staff surveyed trainers, school staff, and participants in the program about their impressions of the MegaSkills program. There were 23 surveys returned by school staff:

- Almost three fourths (71%) saw improvement in the academic work of students whose parents had received training.
- About half (45%) believed the program had an effect on the behavior and social skills of the students.
- Almost two thirds (60%) believed that students had a better attitude after parents received training.

Parent Opinion

Approximately 100 parents returned surveys.

- Most (81%) indicated that their MegaSkills training had increased their child's interest in attending school.
- The great majority (88% and 89% respectively) believed that the MegaSkills program was easy to implement at home and had improved communication between parent and child.

Trainer Opinion

Eleven of the 64 MegaSkills trainers (17%) returned surveys. All indicated a positive experience with the program and enthusiasm on the part of the parents.

In general, the MegaSkills program is regarded highly by all who returned surveys. Parents indicated that the program improves communication and makes them feel more responsible for their children's education. When asked about the drug-free message of MegaSkills, project staff indicated that this strengthening of the family relationship and family dialogue would allow parents to be more aware of their children and perhaps prevent drug and alcohol use. Being a better parent now, they believe, would lead to fewer problems with drugs and alcohol later. Project staff also indicated that parents brought up the topics of drugs and alcohol during workshops, especially during the one on problem solving. Staff plans to develop an exercise clearly related to drug and alcohol use for each workshop to be implemented in the 1991-92 school year.

SECONDARY PROGRAMS

PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP (PAL)

The PAL program served 940 students at AISD campuses. The program was regarded highly by staff and students on surveys. A few (10%) of students served were served in the areas of drug and alcohol use and abuse.

Program Description

Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) is a peer-helping program. The program is an elective course for student, and is directed at training selected eighth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students to function as peer helpers to other students. PAL was selected as one of President Bush's "points of light" in May of 1991. The course is offered at all AISD high schools and at Fulmore, Dobie, and Porter Middle Schools, and Kealing Junior High. There were 253 students enrolled in September, 1990. Covington Middle School began a PAL program in the spring, 1991 semester with 16 students. Each campus has a sponsor who is responsible for the training and implementation of the PAL program on the campus.

Training consists of a PAL course and an additional 20 hours of training beyond the classroom training. The PAL course teaches self-awareness, group dynamics, communication skills, helping strategies, problem solving, decision-making skills, tutoring skills, substance abuse prevention, knowledge of community resources, and conflict resolution. PAL students (PALs) on each campus watched videotapes on drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, each campus arranged for outside speakers to address the students on the topic. One high school program prepared a play about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse to be presented to other students.

Before PALs begin helping other students they must complete 30 days of initial in-class training. Outside training, provided either voluntarily or through a contract with the PAL coordinator, is given by social workers, psychologists, law enforcement agencies, dispute resolution center personnel, and alcohol and drug abuse specialists. Information on drug and alcohol abuse was provided at a conference sponsored by the Peer Assistance Network of Texas, by school nurses, at an alcohol and drug seminar, and by various consultants hired at the campus level. Once trained, the PALs may work with younger students from their own campuses or with students from feeder middle/junior high or elementary schools.

Opinions about PAL

Student Opinion

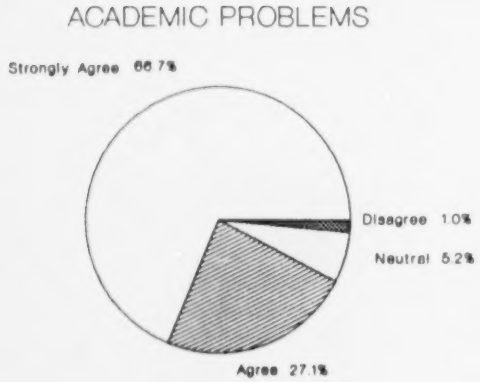
Student opinion of the program was high. Results for the 1991 survey were similar to those on the 1990 survey. Almost all students agreed that the PAL program:

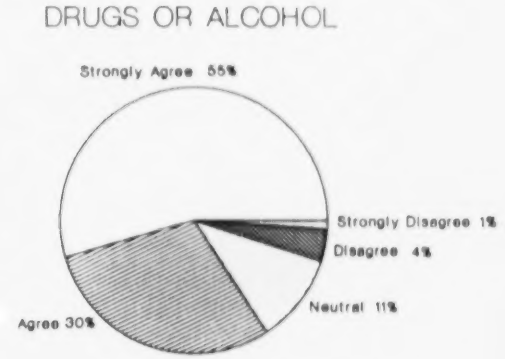
- Provides a listening ear to students (99%),
- Helps with academic problems (92%),
- Is an effective way for older students to work with potential dropouts (90%), and
- Helped students avoid problems with drugs or alcohol (85%).

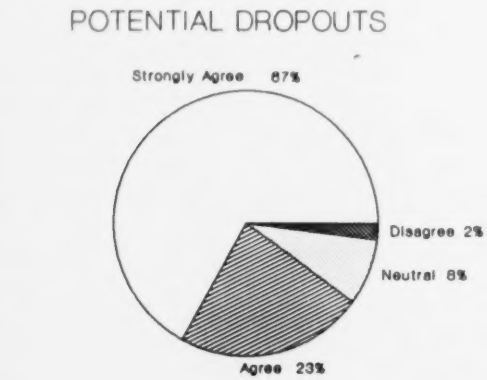
Figure 8 shows all student responses.

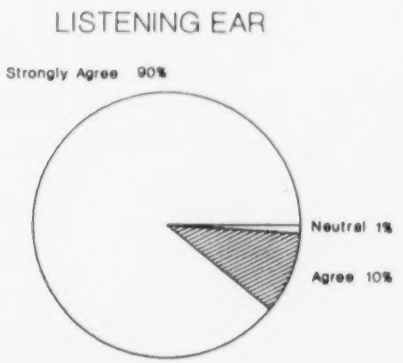
FIGURE 8
STUDENT RESPONSES TO: THE PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY FOR OLDER STUDENTS TO:

- **PROVIDE A LISTENING EAR FOR STUDENTS.**
- **TO WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE POTENTIAL DROPOUTS.**
- **HELP YOUNGER STUDENTS AVOID PROBLEMS WITH DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.**
- **HELP YOUNGER STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC PROBLEMS.**









AISD Staff Opinion

Almost half (47%) of teachers surveyed on the districtwide survey had referred students to the PAL program. Teachers, like students, tended to agree that PAL was an effective way for older students to help younger students, but not as strongly.

- Most teachers (69%) indicated that the PAL program provided a listening ear to students.
- Almost two thirds (60%) thought PAL helped students with decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- More than half (59%) said PAL was an effective way for peer helpers to work with potential dropouts.
- More than half (55%) indicated PAL helped students with academic problems and attendance.
- Less than half (47%) indicated PAL helped students with problems with drugs or alcohol.

Figure 10 shows all teacher responses.

Students Receiving PAL Services

PAL students were asked to keep records of the students they served and to turn these in monthly to their PAL sponsor. The PAL student records included the name and student ID number of the student receiving services as well as the type of services rendered. This year, records were kept on all students involved in the PAL program. PAL sponsors kept track of the hours PAL students spent with other students. In the 1990-91 school year the PAL program logged 8,553 hours with 940 students served during 3,416 contacts with students. Figure 9 shows a breakdown by grade level of students served by the program.

FIGURE 9
STUDENTS SERVED BY HIGH SCHOOL PALS BY GRADE LEVEL, 1990-91

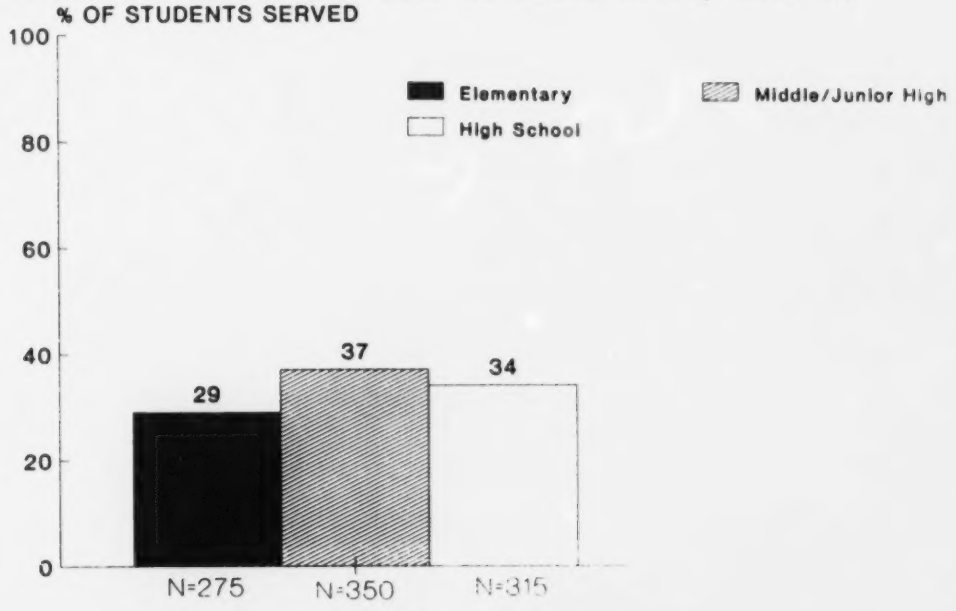
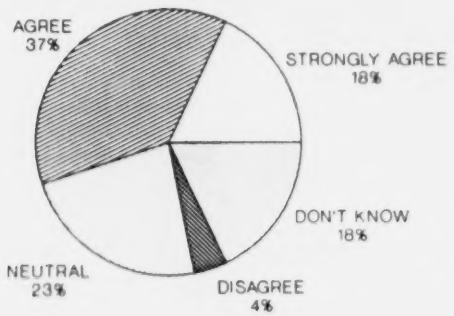


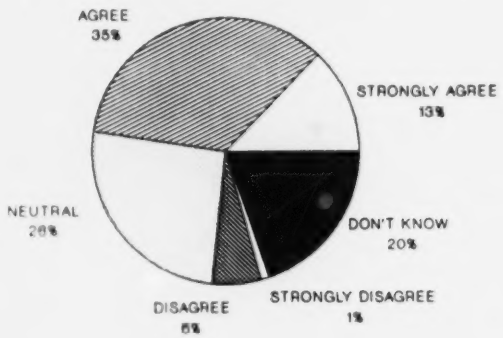
FIGURE 10
TEACHER RESPONSES TO: THE PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY FOR PEER HELPERS TO:

- **AID STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC PROBLEMS AND ATTENDANCE.**
- **TO WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE POTENTIAL DROPOUTS.**
- **HELP STUDENTS AVOID PROBLEMS WITH DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.**
- **PROVIDE A LISTENING EAR TO STUDENTS.**
- **HELP STUDENTS WITH DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS**

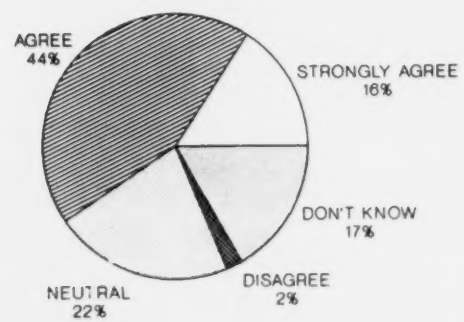
ACADEMIC PROBLEMS AND ATTENDANCE



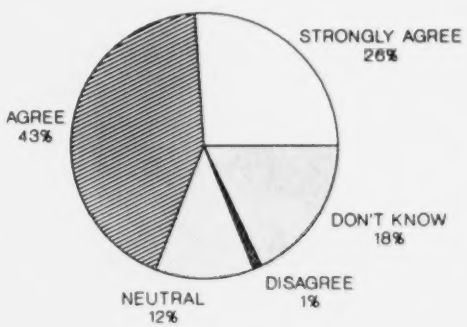
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



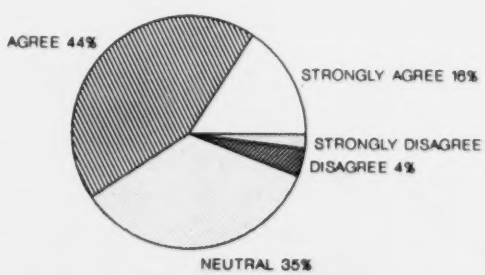
POTENTIAL DROPOUTS



LISTENING EAR



DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING



The PAL students delivered services on a range of topics, including self-esteem, personal relations, tutoring, staying in school, and drug and alcohol abuse. The number of students who were told about drugs and alcohol declined from about 20% in the 1989-90 school year to 10% in the 1991 school year.

Performance on measures of school success by students receiving PAL services in 1990-91

One way to evaluate whether students in the District are succeeding in their education is to look at indices like attendance, dropout rate, grade point average, etc. The Office of Research and Evaluation has designed a special set of computer programs called the Generic Evaluation System (GENESYS) to gather outcome information on programs of interest. These programs were used for most of the following analyses of the students receiving PAL services. Details about GENESYS are contained in ORE Pub. No. 90.30.

Achievement

The GENESYS system uses regression analysis to predict the scores for groups of students on standardized tests. This aspect of GENESYS is called the Report on Program Effectiveness (ROPE). Elementary students and middle school/junior high students in AISD take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) annually. Senior high school students take the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) tests annually. For almost all grade levels and tests the number of students was too small to make a prediction. In grades 6,7, and 8 a sufficent amount of students took the tests in Reading Comprehension, Mathematices, Language, and Work Study to make a prediction. In all cases the PAL program had no impact on standardized test performance.

Attendance

Attendance rates for all groups declined from the fall to the spring semester. A decline in attendance is common districtwide between the fall and spring semesters. Attendance rates for spring, 1991 were lower than spring, 1990 for all groups. Fall, 1990 attendance rates were lower than fall, 1989 groups except for elementary students served. Based on these findings, the PAL program does not to seem to improve the attendance rates of students served. See Figure 11 for attendance rates for the 1989-90 and 1990-91 school years for all groups.

FIGURE 11
ATTENDANCE RATES FOR 1989-90 AND 1990-91 SCHOOL YEARS FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING PAL SERVICES IN 1990-91

	Attendance Rate 1989-90		Attendance Rate 1990-91	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Elementary	95.2	95.2	95.9	93.7
Middle/ Junior High	95.3	93.0	93.7	91.5
Senior High	91.9	88.0	88.4	83.9

Credits Earned/Grade Point Average (GPA)

The number of credits earned remained virtually unchanged from the 1989-90 school year to the 1990-91 school year. Grade point averages for the high school group declined from the 1989-90 school year to the 1990-91 school year. There was also a decline in GPA between the fall and spring semesters. It appears that participation in the PAL program does not have a positive effect on either the credits earned or the GPA of students served by the program. Figure 12 shows credits earned and GPA for the high school students served by semester.

FIGURE 12
1989-90 AND 1990-91 CREDITS EARNED AND GRADE POINT AVERAGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVING PAL SERVICES IN 1990-91

	1989-90		1990-91	
CATEGORY	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Credits Earned	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.7
GPA	75.4	73.9	74.8	73.6

SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The SSLDP was implemented as planned. Students indicated that the program helped them see themselves as leaders.

Program Description

The Secondary Student Leadership Development Program (SSLDP) was developed by the AISD Office of Home/School Services. The program consists of 100 one-day workshops for selected secondary students. Each AISD secondary campus was offered three workshops, each with a capacity of 50 students. Special centers, such as the Alternative Learning Center, also were invited to participate. A total of 24 AISD campuses attended at least one workshop. The program served a total of 4,283 students at the Friday Mountain Ranch, a retreat setting outside of Austin. An additional 282 students on two elementary campuses were served with similar methods by project staff on the home campus. Each campus, aided by the grant-provided project facilitator, designed its own workshop. Variation between workshops was quite large. In addition, campuses selected which students would attend. Campus choices ranged from students who were very much "at risk" to student leaders and high achievers. The wide range of activities included by the campuses and the differences among students attending workshops made each workshop a unique experience. The common idea across workshops was to develop higher awareness of leadership issues and to increase students' leadership abilities. Because of the unique design of each workshop it is difficult to find a global comparison. Surveys were sent to school staff involved in the program. One third of students participating were also surveyed. Approximately 750 surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of about 50%.

Opinion about SSLDP

Student Opinion

Student opinion of the program was favorable with (see Figure 17):

- Most (80%) indicating that the SSLDP helped them see themselves as a leader,
- Almost three quarters (71%) indicating they felt more confident because of the workshop,
- Almost two thirds (64%) indicating that they were better able to make decisions, and
- The majority (58%) indicating that they were better able to resist drugs and alcohol because of the workshop.

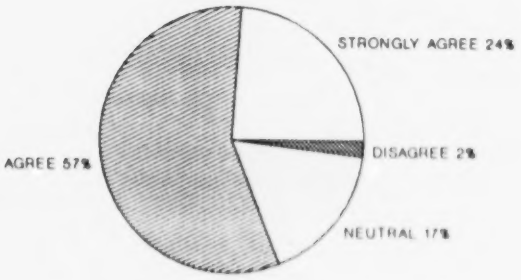
The only case where less than half of the students expressed a favorable opinion was in the case of learning about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Almost half (48%) of students

indicated the workshop had taught them about this topic. Examination of student comments suggests that students may have responded as they did because they had already learned about the dangers of drugs and alcohol from other programs, notably, according to student's comments, DARE.

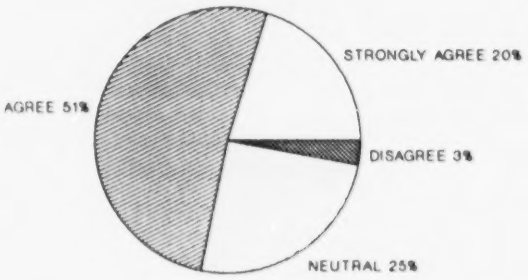
FIGURE 13
STUDENT RESPONSES TO:

- **The Secondary Student Leadership Development Program helped me see myself as a leader.**
- **I feel more confident because of the leadership workshop.**
- **I am better able to make decisions because of the leadership workshop.**
- **I learned about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse at the Secondary Student Leadership Development Program.**
- **I am better able to resist drugs and alcohol because of the leadership workshop.**

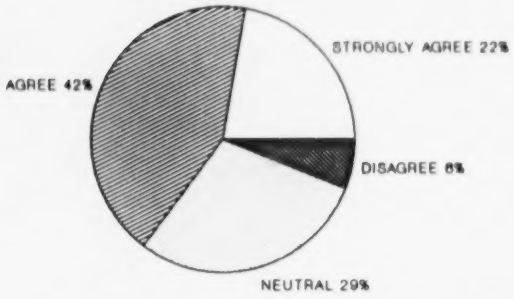
LEADER



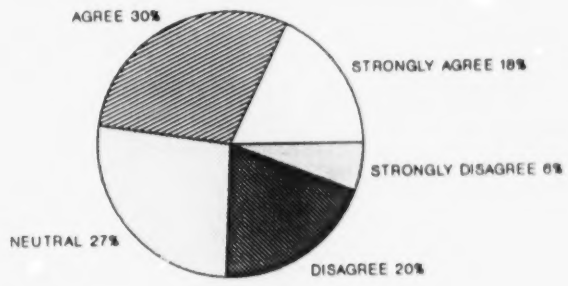
MORE CONFIDENT



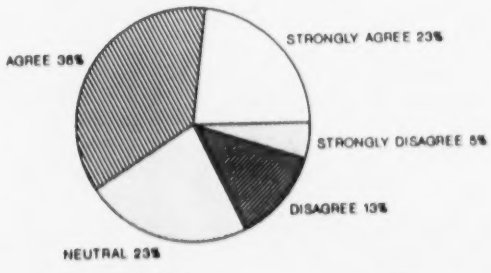
MAKE DECISIONS



DANGERS OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



RESIST DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



On questions dealing with leadership, confidence, and decision-making, few students expressed disagreement (3%-8%). However, when asked whether they had learned about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse or whether they were better able to resist drugs and alcohol because of the workshop more students (19% and 26%, respectively) disagreed that the workshop had done this (see Figure 13).

SSLDP Staff Opinion

SSLDP staff were satisfied with the implementation of the program in 1990-91. They believe the goals of the program were achieved, in terms of activities presented and number of students served. They also indicated that the program had served its purpose as a one-day opportunity for students to enhance their confidence and increase their knowledge of their leadership potential.

There are plans to change the structure of the workshops significantly for the 1991-92 school year. Emphasis will be placed on designing activities with a strict no-use message. In addition, there will be more preliminary activities for both school staff and selected students at the home campus. After the workshop there will be an attempt to have support groups and other follow-up activities. Project staff also indicated that they would like to include workshops for 5th- and 6th-grade students who are about to enter middle/junior high school.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROJECT

The Dispute Resolution Project was not implemented as planned. Four AISD schools received training during the 1990-91 school year. Mediation teams were formed on these campuses.

Program Description

AISD contracted with the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) of Austin to provide training in mediation skills to AISD staff and students. Training in dispute resolution was considered related to drug and alcohol abuse prevention because problems with substance abuse, by the individual or other family members, often lead to disputes on the campus. Once trained, the individuals were to return to their home campuses and serve two purposes. First, they would act as mediators in solving disputes on the campus. Second, they would act as trainers to other individuals on the campus so that the program would become self-perpetuating, with the DRC providing guidance and refresher courses in the future.

Mediation teams were formed and provided service to their campuses. There are plans to train staff from four additional high schools in the summer in the hope that mediation can begin in the fall.

DISTRICTWIDE PROGRAMS

PREVENTION AND REMEDIATION IN DRUG EDUCATION

The PRIDE label has been used by the District to indicate total drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts. In the 1990-91 school year there was no PRIDE coordinator and the viability of the program suffered.

Program Description

Prevention and Remediation in Drug Education (PRIDE) was the title adopted for AISD's drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts by the School Board in 1981-82. PRIDE served as an umbrella under which District efforts were organized. As federally funded programs have increased and locally funded programs and efforts have decreased, PRIDE has become less visible and viable. The District continues to use the PRIDE label for both local campus programs and districtwide ones. In 1990-91, no PRIDE coordinator was appointed. This affected the organization of the PRIDE program. Because there was no PRIDE coordinator to oversee campus activities, no record of campus activities for the 1990-91 school year exists. Although it is certain that activities related to drug and alcohol abuse prevention occurred on the campuses, there is no way of counting these programs, nor of assessing their impact in terms of students and others served by them. In addition, no DFSC grant monies were allocated to the PRIDE program.

The PRIDE coordinator would also have been responsible for organizing the annual PRIDE conference. The DFSC budget included an allocation for this conference. Because there was no PRIDE coordinator the conference did not occur in 1990-91. Past PRIDE conferences have been rated highly by school staff and parents who attended as a means of gaining information about drugs and alcohol.

The District continues to use the PRIDE label to refer to its drug and alcohol education efforts. Because there is no coordinator, no records of campus activities, no comprehensive plan for the continuation or implementation of activities, nor any monetary resources committed perhaps the District should consider use of the PRIDE label. Alternatively, adequate resources could be allocated to recreate a strong PRIDE core.

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (OSSS)

The OSSS provided a half-time intern, consultants, support groups to the AISD Drug-Free programs. The Plays for Living project was also coordinated by the OSSS. Money was allocated to provide one play for each secondary and elementary campus.

The OSSS is a locally funded office that provides psychological counseling, training, and crisis intervention to the schools. DFSC funds are used to fund a half-time intern in the office, consultants to provide counselor training in leading support groups, and Plays for Living, which present an anti-drug and alcohol use message.

OSSS Intern

The OSSS intern provided direct intervention to schools and served as an assistant to the Coordinator of the OSSS. Her primary role was to help with support groups in the schools. The OSSS sent evaluations to the campus staff with whom she worked. The intern received 16 evaluation forms. Most of the questions on the form were short answer and difficult to quantify. However, there was one question that asked staff to indicate the helpfulness of the intern's services. The scale ranged from 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful). Ratings were positive, with all respondents rating her services a 5.

Consultants

Consultants were contracted by the OSSS to provide training in leading support groups to campus counselors. Funds were available to provide one workshop for both the elementary and secondary level. The workshop for secondary counselors, however, was cancelled because of lack of interest according to the director of the OSSS. Elementary counselors received training in a group format. The OSSS does not maintain records of which schools have support groups functioning.

Plays for Living

Child and Family Services of Austin developed two plays with an anti-use message for AISD. The elementary play, "Three for Three," portrays three students at a bus stop discussing how one character's problem with drugs and alcohol has ruined their collective friendship. The secondary play, "Let's Get Basic," portrays four students in detention discussing current issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, sex and pregnancy, and cheating. After both plays, staff lead a discussion with students on the topics presented. A play was funded for each elementary and secondary campus. However, 26 elementary, three junior high/middle schools, and four high schools participated.

DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION

DARE served each fifth and seventh grader in AISD. All students perceived the program as helpful, with fifth graders reacting more favorably than seventh graders. AISD staff surveyed also indicated that the program taught students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The DARE officers indicated great dissatisfaction with being housed at the Alternative Learning Center.

Program Description

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) is a joint educational effort between AISD and the Austin Police Department (APD). The curriculum explains the harmful effects of substance abuse. In addition, it aims at helping students to recognize and resist the pressures that influence them to experiment with drugs or alcohol. The program also presents opportunities for students to participate in self-esteem enhancing activities. These include role playing and practicing cognitive and behavioral skills that encourage communication, decision making, and problem solving. The DARE program depends on a strong commitment on the part of the local police department and close contact with the school district. The Coordinator for Student Affairs acts as liaison between AISD and APD. This person also coordinates the logistics of program implementation.

The fifth-grade DARE curriculum, which was developed and implemented in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1983-84, consists of seventeen 45- to 60-minute sessions conducted by specially trained police officers. In addition to classroom instruction, the officers interact with the students at lunch and on the playground. They also introduce DARE to parents at PTA meetings in the schools where they are teaching. The seventh-grade DARE curriculum was also developed in Los Angeles. It consists of ten 45- to 60-minute lessons similar to the fifth-grade curriculum. The DARE program was implemented at both the fifth- and seventh-grade levels again this year.

Officer Characteristics

APD selects officers to serve as instructors. In fall, 1990, there were 11 DARE officers--five women, three of whom were minorities, and six men, two of whom were minorities. In spring, 1991, a female minority officer replaced one of the male minority officers. Also, in spring, 1991, the program went from being headed by one senior sergeant to two.

The 11 officers served all fifth-grade classes at the 64 District elementary schools and all seventh-grade classes at the 13 junior high/middle schools. The schools were divided so that one half

received the program in the fall, and the remaining one half received it in the spring.

Opinions About the DARE Program

Officer Opinion

The DARE officers were interviewed in a group at the DARE offices. The officers indicated that they believed that the DARE program is an excellent way to teach students about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. They continue to cite units containing role play as activities that reach the students best. The officers, however, are dissatisfied in two areas. Foremost, they are unhappy with the location of their office. The officers are housed at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC). The portable building that houses the office does not have running water. The officers report that the students harass them and have vandalized their cars. They also believe that the District expects them to be an enforcement presence on the campus, which is not part of their mission. The City pays the salary of the officers, and AISD provides program support and housing. The officers feel that this housing is inadequate and would like to be moved as soon as possible. Secondly, the officers would like more time in some classes. They indicated that a minimum of 45 minutes was needed for each lesson, preferably an hour. Some schools are only allowing thirty minutes, which they think is not long enough. In addition, they would like schools to schedule classes 10 minutes apart to allow them time to prepare for the next class.

Student Opinion

In 1990-91, as in previous years, a random sample of DARE students was administered a survey dealing with their opinion about their DARE experience. One third of DARE classes taught in both fall, 1990 and spring, 1991 at both the fifth- and seventh-grade levels were selected.

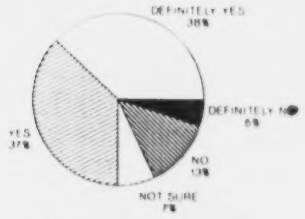
Fifth-grade students tended to have a more positive opinion about the program than did seventh graders on the 1991 survey. Typically seventh-grade respondents have had a less favorable opinion than fifth graders. A variety of reasons could be postulated why this is the case, but there is no evidence to support any one hypothesis.

All students indicated that DARE taught them about the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. Three fourths (74%) of seventh graders and almost all (89%) of fifth graders agreed that they learned about the harmful effects of drugs from DARE. When asked about the harmful effects of alcohol, more than half (65%) of seventh graders and most (82%) of fifth graders agreed that DARE had taught them about that. It appears that the DARE program teaches AISD students about the dangers of using both drugs and

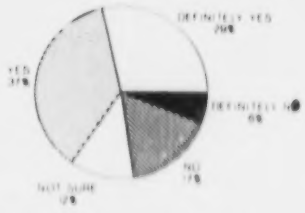
teaches AISD students about the dangers of using both drugs and alcohol. Figure 14 shows all responses by grade to these two questions.

FIGURE 14
DARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO: DID DARE TEACH YOU MORE ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECT OF ILLEGAL DRUGS/ALCOHOL THAN YOU KNEW BEFORE?

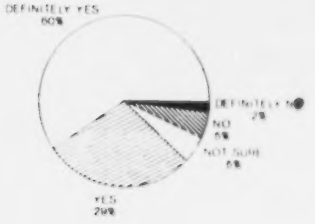
7TH GRADE DRUGS



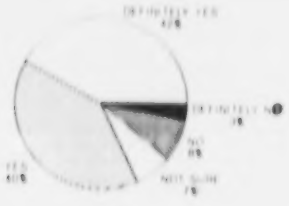
7TH GRADE ALCOHOL



5TH GRADE DRUGS



5TH GRADE ALCOHOL



Staff Opinion

AISD teachers were asked about the DARE program on the districtwide survey. Teachers were asked to indicate whether DARE communicated information to students about drugs and alcohol, taught students skills and strategies for resisting negative peer pressure, and taught behavioral skills that could be used in the classroom. Staff thought that the DARE program did all of these with the largest percentage indicating that DARE provided information about drugs and alcohol. Figure 15 shows elementary and middle/junior high school teacher responses to this question.

FIGURE 15
ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER RESPONSES TO: THE DARE CURRICULUM (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY):

ITEM	Percent Selecting Elementary (N=536)	Middle/Junior (N=122)
A. Communicates important information to students about the effects of drugs and alcohol.	38%	42%
B. Effectively teaches students skills and strategies for resisting negative peer pressure.	32%	33%
C. Teaches valuable behavioral skills that students can use and teachers can reinforce in any classroom setting.	30%	25%

These responses are virtually unchanged from last year's survey. AISD staff as well as students tend to agree that the DARE program teaches students about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. Teachers also indicated that the program helped students deal with negative peer pressure and taught behavioral skills to the students.

Austin Independent School District

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